

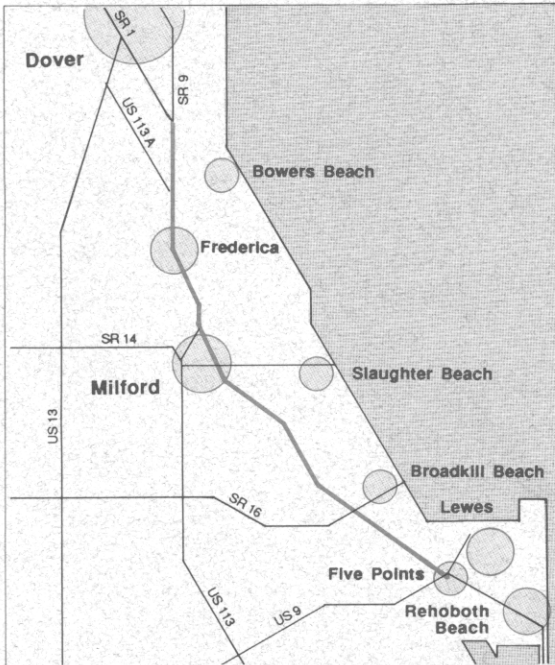
On the Road

ON THE RELIEF ROUTE-S.R.1

Route 7 to U.S. Route 113

Issue 7

Summer 1991



The roadway shown above in red indicates the study area of the corridor-preservation project.

ODESSA AND TOWNSEND WORKSHOPS LEAD TO DESIGN PUBLIC HEARING

Two workshops were recently conducted concerning the Odessa/Townsend-area segment of the Relief Route: one in Odessa on June 4th and the other in Townsend on July 10th. Both workshops focussed in detail on the final alignment alternatives for the 14.5-mile segment from Scott Run—just south of the C & D Canal bridge—to just north of Smyrna.

The June workshop focussed on two alternatives: the alignment presented at the April workshop and a modified alignment preferred by wetlands-regulatory agencies. The July workshop examined alternatives presented by residents of Sycamore Farms and Chestnut Hill within a limited geographic area: Pine Tree Corners to Odessa. After significant environmental analysis and public review of all these alternatives, DelDOT will present its preferred alignment at a Design Public Hearing this fall. Be on the lookout for *On the Road* public-hearing announcements and notices published in local papers in weeks to come. ■

SR-1 CORRIDOR-PRESERVATION PROJECT

In an effort to avoid the future need for a new highway—similar to the Relief Route—south of Dover, DelDOT has instituted an innovative study to preserve the existing vehicular capacity on SR-1 between the Dover Air Force Base and Nassau. The study, which is partially funded by the Federal Highway Administration, is one of ten corridor-preservation “demonstration” projects across the country.

Recognizing that traffic and development pressures will increase on this southernmost segment of SR-1 when the Relief Route is opened to traffic in the next several years, DelDOT has begun planning now before road-capacity problems really begin. For example, one objective initially is to limit new access directly onto SR-1 since multiple driveways and breaks in the median reduce the vehicular capacity and travel speed of the road. Yet DelDOT does not intend to prevent future development; the plan is to guide it by encouraging shared driveways and eventually building service roads where necessary. The department wants to be sure that as development does take place, adequate land is set aside for the construction of service roads and for the possible widening of SR-1 if determined necessary in the future.

Another important goal is to avoid the need for bypasses and for the disruptive and costly property acquisitions which are traditionally associated with the construction of highways such as SR-1 north of Dover. By taking steps now to ensure that the existing roadway can continue to function as the major carrier of through traffic south of Dover—steps which include setting aside land for future widening and possible grade separation of intersections—the department expects to avoid not only the significant cost but also the disruption to people and the environment associated with building bypasses and new roads. With the cooperation of landowners, and of the Kent and Sussex County administrations which regulate land use along SR-1, the corridor-preservation program can be a very successful alternative to construction of a major new highway project. ■



Delaware
Department of Transportation

Kermit H. Justice, Secretary
John T. Davis, Director
Division of Highways

On the Road is published by the Delaware Department of Transportation and is the official newsletter of the SR-1 Relief Route project.

ATTENTION ODESSA-AREA AND SOUTH-OF-DOVER RESIDENTS AND BUSINESSES

Notices of future workshops and public hearings will appear in local papers and be sent to people on the SR-1 mailing list. *On the Road* subscribers are requested to submit names and addresses of friends and neighbors interested in joining the mailing list to:

On the Road
c/o KFS, Inc.
219 N. Broad St., 9th Flr.
Philadelphia, PA 19107

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STONES

- **ARCHAEOLOGY: Uncovered Prehistoric Sites**

This bird's-eye view, looking west, shows archaeologists working at the Pollack Farm site.

- **SMYRNA BYPASS: Environmentally Sensitive Mats**

- **SMYRNA TO DOVER SECTION: Innovative Trestle Bridge**

The construction of the Mill Creek bridge, shown above, is well underway.

- **DOVER BYPASS: 1.5-Million Cubic Yards**

The Route 8 overpass is shown with its piles driven and embankment under construction.

PERSPECTIVE

Q: What is the environmental significance of wetlands; why are they so important?

Q: What is a wetland?

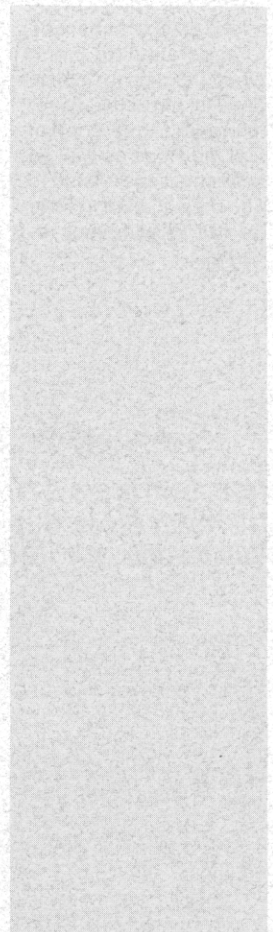
Dick Hassel in his Philadelphia office of the Corps.

Q: What types of wetlands exist in Delaware and are significant to the Relief Route project?

Q: What regulatory jurisdiction over wetlands does the Corps of Engineers possess?

Q: If some wetlands are so hard to recognize, how does one tell where they are?

Estuarine wetlands, such as Drawyer Creek, are often indicated by the presence of Phragmites australis or common reed.



("Perspective" continued from page 3)

RH: There are specific indicators of wetlands that must be evident to determine if a wetland exists. These indicators have to do with the characteristics of the vegetation, soil and hydrology. All three indicators must be present for an area to be a wetland.

Q: What are some examples of these indicators?

RH: Typical *vegetation* indicators include the presence of cattails and common reed, as well as trees such as weeping willow, red maple and sweet gum. *Soils* that occur in wetlands are "hydric soils," and typically consist primarily of peat or decomposed plant material. Examples of *hydrology* indicators include standing or flowing water for seven or more consecutive days during the growing season, or water marks on tree trunks.

Q: What efforts need to be made to mitigate or lessen the adverse effects projects like the Relief Route have on wetlands?

RH: In order of priority: avoid, minimize, compensate. The first effort should be to *avoid* wetland locations to the maximum extent practicable. This is often impossible in states such as Delaware where a significant portion of the land area is considered wetlands. Therefore, with a large project like the Relief Route, the next step is to *minimize* the project's impact. An example of this is to place the roadway on a bridge structure over and through a wetland—allowing the wetland to remain whole—rather than build the road bed on fill material which acts to sever the wetland into two or more pieces, thereby reducing the value of the wetland. An objective of the Corps is to minimize further fragmentation of wetlands, particularly in Delaware where so many wetlands have been previously converted to agricultural lands. And last, where minimization has been achieved as much as possible, any time a wetland is filled, the applicant is required to *compensate* by creating new wetlands out of uplands. ■

TO OUR READERS

The State of Delaware and the consultant team are committed to continuing the citizen-input process during the design and construction phases of the project. We invite you to write us with questions or comments regarding *On the Road* or to arrange for a presentation to bring your group up to date on the Relief Route. To receive your free copy of *On the Road* as well as other mailings related to the project, please write or call us with your request.

For More INFORMATION

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- Public Information - contact Michele Ackles, Manager of Community Relations, at 739-4313
- Design Issues - contact Dave DuPlessis, Project Coordinator, at 739-4643
- Environmental Issues - contact Joe Wutka, Location Studies Engineer, at 739-4642
- Right-of-Way Acquisition and Relocation - contact Ira White, Project Acquisitions Manager, at 739-2776

Or CONTACT THE CONSULTANT TEAM

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